Public sector employment and earnings rise in 2023-24

Media Release

Released 7/11/2024

Source: Public sector employment and earnings, 2023-24 financial year

The number of public sector employees rose by 3.6 per cent between June 2023 and June 2024, according to figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Bjorn Jarvis, ABS head of labour statistics, said: “There was a total of $232 billion of wages paid to public sector employees during the 2023-24 financial year across all levels of governments. This was an increase of 8.0 per cent from the year before.

"The rise in the public sector wage bill reflected a combination of underlying wage growth, higher employment, and other compositional changes, such as hours worked."

State government remained the largest level of government, making up around 77 per cent of public sector employment. This was followed by the Commonwealth government (15 per cent) and Local government (8 per cent

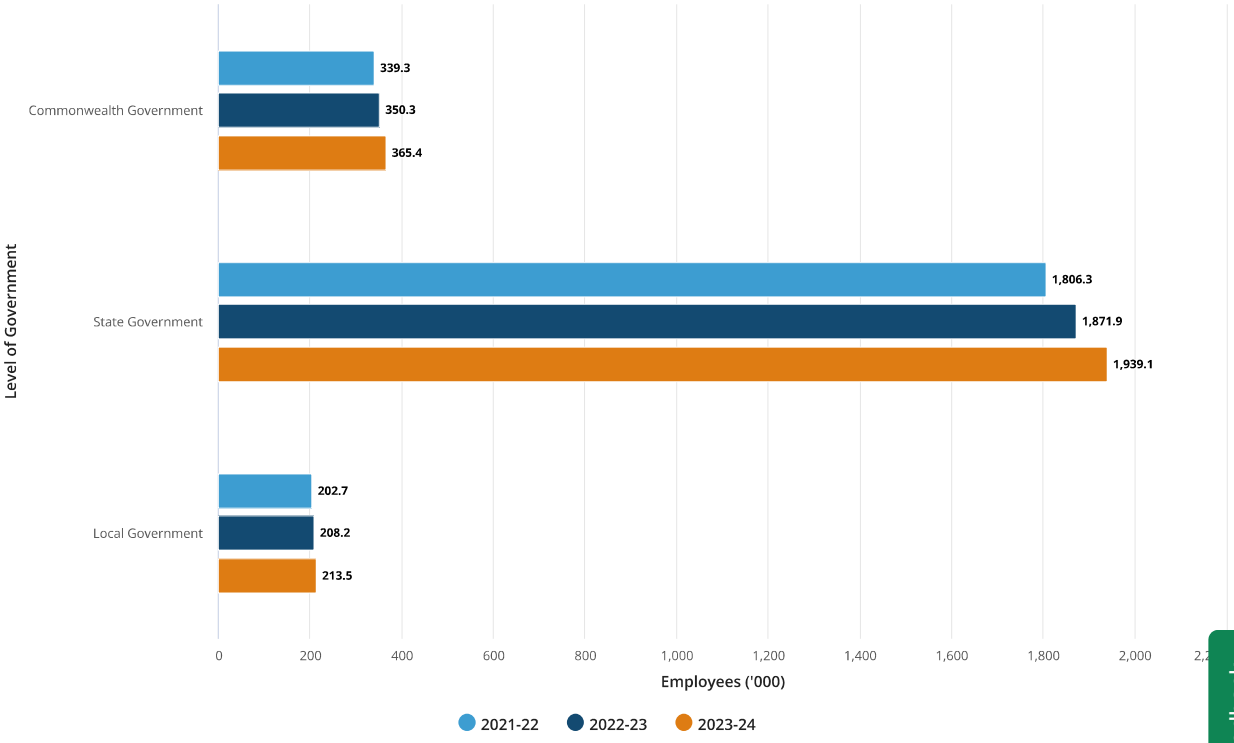
Commonwealth government employment, which includes defence personnel, rose 4.3 per cent to 365,400 employees. The $37.3 billion in wages paid by the Commonwealth government was a rise of 10.0 per cent compared to 2022-23.

State government employment increased by 3.6 per cent, to 1.9 million employees. Around $178.4 billion in wages were paid by state and territory governments, which was 7.6 per cent higher than 2022-23.

Local government continued to have the lowest share of employment of the three levels of government, and had the smallest rise in the year to June 2024, up by 2.5 per cent to 213,500 employees. These employees were paid $16.4 billion, a 7.3 per cent growth on the year before.

Employees, by Level of government

Feedback



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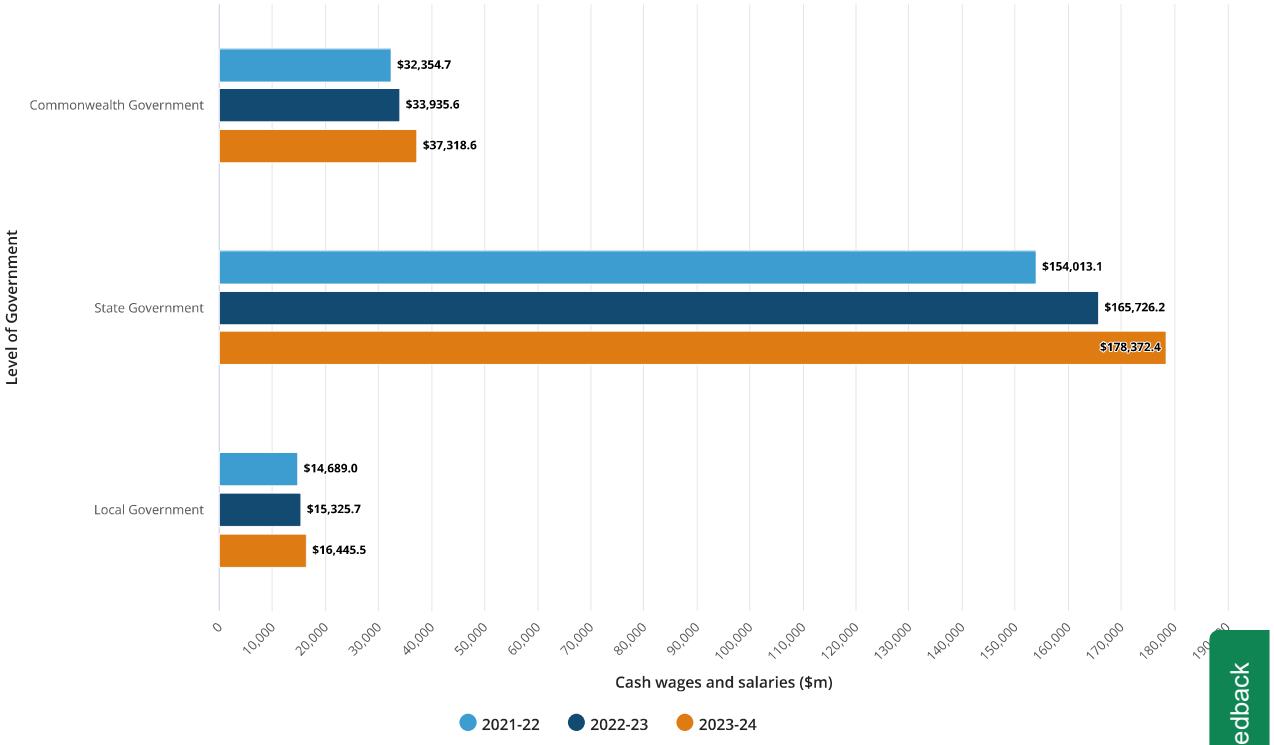
Cash wages and salaries, by Level of government



Feedback

The public sector is concentrated in three key industries: Public administration and safety, Education and training, and Health care and social assistance. Together these three industries make up about 90 per cent of public sector employment and wages.

Of these three industries, Health care and social assistance had the highest growth in employment in June, with a rise of 4.4 per cent to 642,400 employees. This was closely followed by Public administration and safety with growth of 3.9 per cent to 849,400 employees, with Education and training rising 2.2 per cent to 753,900 employees.

Public administration and safety had the largest growth in total earnings of these three industries, rising 8.5 per cent to $83.4 billion. This was closely followed by Education and training, up 7.6 per cent to $57.9 billion, and Health care and social assistance which grew 7.1 per cent to $61.7 billion.

For more breakdowns, including by states and territories, see Public sector employment and earnings (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/2023-24) .

Media notes

- The highest quality public sector employment and jobs information is available in the Public sector

employment and earnings (/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/public-sector-employment-and-earnings/latest-release) and Labour Account Australia (/statistics/labour/labour-accounts/labour-account-australia/latest-release) releases. The ABS is reviewing sector estimates in Labour Force statistics, which are subject to inherent limitations and should be used with caution.

- Employment is a measure of employees paid in the month of June. Wages refer to "cash wages and salaries", which is a measure of gross earnings for the financial year period.
- Increases in cash wages and salaries reflect a combination of underlying wage growth, changes in employment and other compositional effects such as hours worked.
- Estimates of percentage change have been calculated using unrounded estimates and may be different from, but are more accurate than, movements obtained from calculating percentage changes using the rounded estimates presented in this publication.
- The ABS acknowledges the continued support of the ATO in enabling the ABS to produce insights into the Australian labour market from Single Touch Payroll data.
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